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ACTION ARA-15
INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 SCS-06 CA-01 H-01 SS-15 SSO-00
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E.O. 11652: N/A
TAGS: CASC, OREP (RYAN), GY
SUBJECT: PROPOSED VISIT TO GUYANA OF REPRESENTATIVES OF THE SOUTHERN CHRISTIAN LEADERSHIP CONFERENCE.
REF: ASELEY HEWITT/AMBASSADOR BURKE TELCON 11/30
1. PROPOSAL THAT AMERICAN CLERGYMEN ASSOCIATED WITH THE SOUTHERN CHRISTIAN LEADERSHIP CONFERENCE TRAVEL TO GUYANA ON A FACT-FINDING VISIT WILL OBVIOUSLY CAUSE SOME CONCERN TO THE GOG. AS YOU KNOW THE GOG IS STILL INTENSELY EMBARRASSED BY THE ASSASSINATION OF CONGRESSMAN RYAN AND THE MASS MURDERS/SUICIDES AT JONESTOWN. THERE HAS BEEN A SLIGHT AIR OF RELIEF DISCERNIBLE IN GOVERNMENT CIRCLES OVER THE LAST COUPLE OF DAYS AS THE VOLUME OF WORLDWIDE PUBLICITY HAS FINALLY GIVEN EVIDENCE OF SUBSIDING, BUT THERE IS STILL CONCERN THAT GUYANA'S IMAGE WORLD-WIDE HAS BEEN PERMANENTLY DAMAGED. THE GOVERNMENT OF GUYANA IS NOT ANXIOUS TO HAVE THE STORY BACK ON THE FRONT PAGES ANYTIME SOON.
FOR THIS REASON THE GOG WILL PROBABLY BE VERY RELUCTANT TO ACCEPT A GROUP OF AMERICAN CLERGYMEN LOOKING INTO THE JONESTOWN MATTER THIS EARLY AFTER THE INCIDENT.
2. IN PREPARING FOR ANY VISIT AMERICAN CHURCHMEN SHOULD FIRST OF
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ALL SECURE THE CONCURRENCE OF THE GOVERNMENT THROUGH THE GUYANESE EMBASSY IN WASHINGTON. ONCE IN GUYANA THEY WILL PROBABLY WISH TO TALK TO THE OFFICERS AND MEMBERS OF THE GUYANA COUNCIL OF CHURCHES WHICH IS PRESENTLY HEADED BY ANGLICAN BISHOP RANDOLPH GEORGE OF STABROEK. AS THE DEPARTMENT KNOWS FROM OUR REPORTING EARLIER THIS YEAR, THE GUYANA COUNCIL OF CHURCHES HAS BEEN VERY CRITICAL OF SUCH GOVERNMENT ACTIONS AS THE REFERENDUM OF LAST JULY AND AS A CONSEQUENCE THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN THE GOVERNMENT AND THE COUNCIL HAS BECOME QUITE STRAINED IN RECENT MONTHS. NEVERTHELESS, THE GUYANA COUNCIL OF CHURCHES DOES REPRESENT ALMOST ALL OF THE CHRISTIAN DENOMINATIONS IN GUYANA INCLUDING ANGLICANS, CATHOLICS, METHODISTS, PRESBYTERIANS, LUTHERANS, SDA, ETC.
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